

February 27, 2023

TESTIMONY OF LESLIE ANDERSON

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BEFORE THE CONNECTICUT COMMITTEE ON GENERAL LAW

Concerning SB 979 An Act Promoting Energy Affordability, Energy Efficiency And Green Cities

Co-Chair Rick Lopes, Co-Chair Joseph Gresko, Senator Stephen Harding, Representative Patrick Callahan, and Members of the Environment Committee:

The Propane Gas Association of New England (PGANE) is pleased to have the opportunity to share with you a number of concerns we have about SB 979.

PGANE is a regional alternative energy trade association representing members of the propane industry in the six New England States. We exist to serve the propane industry by promoting safety, education, and public awareness of the uses of propane. Our membership includes propane companies and suppliers, including numerous small companies who are often family owned and operated, many for several generations. Propane on demand hot water heaters, cooktops, and furnaces produce less greenhouse gas emissions than electric heat pumps, as well as less nitrogen and less sulfur oxides. In fact, propane is the preferred partner with solar for zero net energy housing. Comparing electricity and propane with a lifecycle analysis, propane wins hands down with the lowest carbon emissions.

There is a reason why states adopt building codes statewide across America. It would be nightmare to try to operate a company where each town and city adopted their own building codes. Our members service the 169 cities in CT and I can't imagine trying to coordinate 189 different sets of codes, on top of the half dozen compliance codes we already utilize and follow today. Section 4(c) would allow municipalities to adopt their own building codes based on emissions, which is basically a ban on traditional fuels and heating equipment. Policymakers should heed the reaction by the public after the US Consumer Product Safety Commission announced the potential banning of gas cooking stoves which was met with outrage and ridicule. Section 4(c) of SB 979 would likely elicit the same backlash as the state would be taking away fuels like propane, natural gas, and renewable biodiesel and renewable propane. Not to mention the chaos this would as 169 towns could have entirely different building codes.

Propane is already cleaner than electricity in CT and it would make no sense to try to disincentivize this clean fuel. In addition, we are working to develop renewable propane from multiple sources. As the grid increases in renewable energy sources so will propane. Renewable propane energy is already being added to conventional propane and we expect propane to continue to be cleaner than electricity in Connecticut as the state works toward its climate goals. Eliminating propane would put our citizens at risk because a strong

industry is required if we are to meet the numerous electricity backup energy sources that utilize propane today. Generators for homes, hospitals, cell towers, to heat water for the homeless, heat outdoor spaces for restaurants, and emergency management to name only a few, rely on propane when the power is out.

Today renewable propane is created during renewable biodiesel refining, but it will be growing in supply with the emergence of sustainable aviation fuels and other processes, such as the recent MIT study which has found a method to create renewable propane from recycled plastic bottles. We urge CT to embrace these new technologies as they are cleaner than CT electricity from a carbon intensity standpoint.

Section 5 of the bill amends current law to require continuing education for licensed HVAC technicians who already have knowledge and experience with all types of heating systems including electric heat pumps. Individuals who have obtained a heating and cooling trade license are already required to have over 8,000 hours of training before they can become a journeyman. This mandate to get additional training is entirely unnecessary and an affront to the hard-working men and women in the trade.

I am also concerned about language in section 2 of the bill that would allow the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to a "Connecticut home energy label". Allowing DEEP to create boutique standards that only apply to Connecticut, that departs from national standards, will not serve the public and we ask that this language be removed from the bill. Lifecycle analysis energy labeling is already underway at the federal level, and CT should plan to use the federal standard.

Energy consumption is a result of several different drivers - the efficiency of the heating/cooling system, home performance (ie. weatherization), weather, and the behavior of the occupants.

Above all, the behavior of the occupants of the dwelling will determine energy consumption. For example, a family of five where the parents are at work and the children are at school, would have used much less energy in 2019 than they did in 2020 during the pandemic, when they worked from home and went to school online because of COVID. Energy usage data shows more about how the prior owner used energy in the home, than it does about the home itself.

Creating a home energy label for residences and rental units to determine the cost of energy (heating, cooling, lighting) usage that would mislead consumers and potentially devalue dwellings.

I ask that you oppose SB 979.

Sincerely,